

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 MCT-01 DOE-15 SOE-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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R 311133Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8636

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 05177

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, IR, SHUM

SUBJ: INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS: GOVERNMENT PITCH TO
OPPOSITION AND OTHER MOVES.

SUMMARY: EXCEPT FOR SHOOTOUT WITH TWO TERRORISTS NEAR KARAJ,
COUNTRY HAS CONTINUED RELATIVELY QUIET FOR PAST WEEK. GOI
SPOKESMAN HAVE CALLED FOR A FAIR HEARING FOR ALL OPPOSITIONISTS
WHO ARE WILLING TO EXPRESS BASIC LOYALTY TO COUNTRY AND
MONARCHY. PRIME MINISTER HAS CALLED FOR WAR ON RED TAPE. GOI
APPEARS TO BE MOVING IN DIRECTION OF TACIT/INDIRECT ADMISSION
OF SOME OPPOSITIONISTS INTO POLITICAL PROCESS ON ONE HAND AND
ON OTHER, TOWARD IMPROVEMENT IN GOI SERVICES TO CITIZENS.
END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS CARRIED STORY OF DEATHS OF TWO TERRORISTS, ONE A
WOMAN, IN APOLICE SHOOTOUT AFTER PAIR HAD ALLEGEDLYKIDNAPPED
A DOCTOR AND HIS FAMILY AND HAD HELD THEM HOSTAGE
FOR TEN HOURS. DEAD OF WOUNDS WERE SOLAIMAN PAVASTEH
HAJI MAHALEH AND MS. RAFAT MEMARAN BENAM. ALL MEMBERS
OF THE KIDNAPPED FAMILY WERE SAFE.

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2. MINISTER OF INFORMATION HELD A PRESS
CONFERENCE MAY 27 WHICH COVERED NUMBER OF DOMESTIC
ISSUES. RECEIVING WIDE PUBLICITY WAS HIS STATEMENT
THAT THOSE WHO DECLARE THEIR FAITH IN THE COUNTRY AND
MONARCHY WILL BE GIVEN A FAIR HEARING. RESPONDING TO PRESS
QUESTION WHY GOI TARS ALL DISSIDENTS WITH SAME BRUSH,

HOMAYOUN SAID GOI "INVITES ALL PATRIOTIC ELEMENTS WHO SUPPORT MONARCHY TO COME FORWARD AND STATE THEIR CASE." MINISTER SUGGESTED SOME DISSIDENT GROUPS LACK INDEPENDENT POSITIONS. ON OTHER ISSUES, HOMANYOUN SAID THERE WOULD BE NO WATER AND POWER SHORTAGES IN IRAN, THOUGH REPAIRS TO NATIONAL POWER GRID MAY LEAD TO SOME "TEMPORARY" CUTS. IN COMMENT ON IRANIAN STUDENTS IN U.S., MINISTER SAID THOSE DEPORTED FOR BREAKING LAWS DO NOT RPT NOT DESERVE ANY SUPPORT FROM TEHRAN.

3. ECHOING MINISTER'S REMARKS ON LOYALTY, FULL-COLUMN EDITORIAL IN FRENCH JOURNAL DE TEHRAN ON MAY 29 (BEING POUCHED) REVIEWED HOMAYOUN'S REMARKS AND ANALYZED DIFFERENCES IN OPPOSITION GROUPS. EDITORIAL MADE IMPORTANT DISTINCTION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS GROUPS LOYAL TO EXILED AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI, WHO WISH TO OVERTHROW SHAH, AND THOSE WHO SEE MONARCHY AS BULWARK OF IRAN AND ARE THEREFORE MORE MODERATE. DISTINCTION ALSO MADE BETWEEN GROUPS WITHIN THE NATIONAL FRONT WHO ARE REVOLUTIONARY LEFTIST AND THOSE WHO ARE "NATIONALISTS AND LIBERAL." EDITORIAL MADE FLAT STATEMENT THAT GOI CANNOT ACCEPT CONTACT WITH THOSE OPPOSED TO THE REGIME, AND CALLED UPON OTHERS TO ACCEPT MONARCHY AND BEGIN TALKING. EDITORIAL WAS OF OFFICIALLY INSPIRED, ACCORDING TO SENIOR PRESSMAN, AND TO EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, IS FIRST TIME GOI EITHER FORMALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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OR INFORMALLY HAS SUGGESTED SOME DISSIDENTS ARE LESS DISSIDENT THAN OTHERS. THIS IS A VERY USEFUL DEPARTURE IN EMBASSY'S OPINION.

4. MEANWHILE, MAY 29, PRIME MINISTER AMOUZEGAR ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES IN ALL MINISTRIES TO BATTLE "RED TAPE AND PETTY OFFICIALDOM". THIS IS THIRD TIME IN RECENT WEEKS PM HAS STRESSED IN PUBLIC IMPROVED ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY EITHER IN GOVERNMENT OR RESURGENCE PARTY OR BOTH. AMOUZEGAR ALSO SAID CABINET WAS FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS CREATED BY OVERPAID URBANIZATION AND INSTANT SHANTYTOWNS AROUND LARGE CITIES. HE CALLED ON GOI TO MINIMIZE BAD EFFECTS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

5. EMBOFF HAD INTERESTING DISCUSSION WITH DIRECTOR IN QUEEN'S BUREAU SECRETARIAT, WHO ECHOED CONCERN WITH PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENTAL EFFICIENCY AND CONCERN WITH PEOPLE. HE CONFIRMED QUEEN'S INCREASED PUBLIC ACTIVITY IN PAST

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 05177

TWO-THREE WEEKS INVOLVING VISITS TO CITIES AND NOTED QUEEN'S SPECIAL BUREAU DIRECTOR NAHAVANDI HAD PUT BUREAU STAFF TO WORK GENERATING IDEAS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE GOI TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS CAUSED BY "INSTANT URBANIZATION." SOURCE SAID COURT WAS COMING TO CONCLUDE THAT ORIGINAL DECISION NOT RPT NOT TO PROVIDE CITY SERVICES TO NEW SHANTYTOWNS WHICH HAD GROWN UP (FOR FEAR OF MAKING THEM EVEN MORE ATTRACTIVE TO RURAL DWELLERS) WAS "PROBABLY A MISTAKE." SHANTYTOWNS AND URBAN SLUMS EXPANDED RAPIDLY AT TIME OF LAND REFORM (BEGINNING 1963) WHEN MANY RURAL DWELLERS, UNCERTAIN WITH THEIR NEWFOUND FREEDOM, HAD FLOCKED TO CITIES AND OVERSUBSCRIBED PROFFERED INDUSTRIAL JOBS. SAME THING HAD HAPPENED AT TIME OF OIL BOOM (1973-75) AND GOI WAS NOW FACED WITH CONSEQUENCES.

6. SAME SOURCE COMMENTED THAT COURT'S COMMUNICATION WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS WAS "BETTER THAN GOVERNMENT'S." HE NOTED THAT GOI'S (READ PRIME MINISTER) TIES WITH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY WERE NOT ALL THAT BAD, BUT CONCEDED THERE HAD BEEN BREAKDOWN AFTER QOM EVENTS (JAN. 9, 1978) WHICH HAD NOT RPT NOT BEEN FULLY HEALED. ALTHOUGH VERY CIRCUMSPECT, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE LEFT DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT MANY IN HIS BUREAU, INCLUDING HIS BOSS, FELT AMOUZEGAR WAS NOT GOOD AT THIS KIND OF POLITICKING. SOURCE ADDED PM WAS ADMIRER BY MOST

IN GOI FOR DOING EXCELLENT AND VERY DIFFICULT JOB OF QUIETLY SHAKING UP GOVERNMENT AND PRESSING TOWARD BETTER PERFORMANCE. SOURCE ADDED WRYLY THAT PRIME MINISTER WOULD PROBABLY NEVER GET CREDIT FOR THIS, EVEN IF HE SUCCEEDED IN MOVING "THE IMMOVABLE OBJECT."

7. COMMENT: HOMAYOUN APPEAL, AND FRENCH PRESS EDITORIAL, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH OTHER SIGNS OF PAST TWO WEEKS SUGGEST GOI IS NOW MOVING TOWARD MORE CONCILIATORY STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH OPPOSITION. PROCESS IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, TO BE FITFUL ONE. OPPOSITIONISTS OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE ARE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF SHAH'S MOTIVES AND SINCERITY IN MOVING TOWARD FREER POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND "SHOW ME" ATTITUDE ON ALL SIDES, AS WELL AS SUBSTANTIAL POLICY DIFFERENCES, ARE LIKELY TO INHIBIT DIALOG.

8. ON OTHER HAND, GOI IS CLEARLY SERIOUS ABOUT IMPROVING SERVICES TO CITIZENRY. PUBLIC STATEMENTS NOTED ABOVE, PLUS RECENT IMPERIAL COMMISSION REPORTS FOCUSING ON BETTER GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE, HAVE PENETRATED TO LOWER LEVELS OF GOI WHO ARE BECOMING MORE SENSITIVE TO CHARGES THEY ARE NOT RESPONSIVE TO CITIZENRY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WEBBERIAN MILLENIM IS AROUND THE CORNER IN IRAN, SIMPLY THAT PETTY BUREAUCRAT IS BEING PRESSED TO SUPPRESS HIS ANNOYANCE, AND MAYBE EVEN FEEL A QUALM OR TWO, WHEN HE KEEPS PEOPLE WAITING FOR SERVICE.
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